

From Battlefield to Hospital

Fast: Getting Soldiers What They Need

The Official U.S. Army Magazine

May 2006
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Soldiers

**The Many Faces
of the Old Guard**

New Hot Topics
PAGE 17



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Precision and discipline are necessities for members of the U.S. Army Drill Team, one element of the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard). — Photo by SGT Jeremy Kern

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THE ARMY depends on its volunteers. As mentioned in our story "Volunteers, the Heart of Army Installations," funding reductions and long deployments have increased the Army's reliance on unpaid volunteers to keep up the momentum of many health- and family related programs. Last year, for example, U.S. Community and Family Support Center volunteers contributed services valued at more than \$11 million.

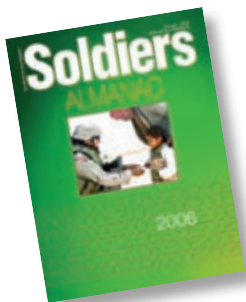
Search any installation Web site and chances are you'll find a link to family and community programs that are looking for volunteers. Sometimes they're seeking people with specific skills or offering training. Most programs are just looking for good people willing to lend a hand.

Vicki Brown, chief of the Army Family Enrichment Division at CFSC, says that more than 28 percent of Army spouses are also volunteers. Army retirees make up another large segment of the volunteer population. And while some people become volunteers as a way of transitioning into the paid workforce, many others do it solely for the satisfaction they gain by helping others. Regardless of your motivation, volunteers, the Army needs you.

And speaking of volunteers, the number of authors contributing stories and photos to **Soldiers** continues to dwindle. We, too, need people to volunteer their talents to tell the Army story from their corners of the world. To contact an editor, e-mail soldiers@belvoir.army.mil or call (703) 806-4505 or (DSN) 656-4505.



Gil High
Editor in Chief



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Dustoff Identification

ON page 61 of the February issue you ran a photo of a UH-60 medevac aircraft lifting off on a mission in Baghdad.

The caption on the photo identifies the Black Hawk as belonging to the 173rd Airborne Brigade. As the pilot in command of the aircraft, I can assure you it doesn't belong to the 173rd, but rather to the 50th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) from Fort Campbell, Ky.

I have seen this photo — incorrectly labeled — all over the Internet, and I thought it was time to set the record straight.

CW2 Robert E. Rees
via e-mail

*WE here at **Soldiers** are at the mercy of those who contribute photos to our annual "This Is Our Army" feature, in that we have to assume that the caption and credit information they provide is correct. Thanks for the correction, and on behalf of the photographer we apologize for the error.*

More on the ACU

WITH reference to SFC Ron Ferguson's February letter regarding the Army Combat Uniform, my first reaction is to say that as NCOs we should embrace the Army's decision to adopt the ACU. But the bottom line is that I just can't embrace this boondoggle of a uniform.

It really bothers me to think that millions of dollars were spent to develop and test a uniform that doesn't blend into either the forest or the desert. In addition, the pin-on badges and use of noisy Velcro are ridiculous; the slanted chest pockets are useless; the pockets on the sleeves are too small and you can't get into them when wearing body armor; the tie-down straps in the cargo pockets are useless; and the waist tie cuts into your skin.

I agree that we needed a new combat uniform, but a redesigned BDU would have worked far better than the ACU.

SSG William Maldonado
Via e-mail

I'D like to reply to a comment SFC Ferguson made about the ACU in his February letter — specifically, I'd like to address the issue of pin-on badges.

The ACU is based on the premise that Soldiers should go into a field or combat environment in a "sterile" uniform, meaning one with no skill badges, name tapes or even the U.S. flag. That's why all are easily removable from the ACU, and that's why the issue of them hurting when worn beneath body armor shouldn't actually be an issue.

SFC Wade M. Williams
via e-mail

WITH regard to the ACU discussion, I think you can find something wrong with anything if you look hard enough, so I'm not surprised Soldiers are complaining about the ACU.

I just purchased a set of ACUs, and I personally think they are much more comfortable than BDUs. There are covers available for the exposed Velcro sections, and we're not supposed to wear the pin-on items in the field, so they shouldn't be underneath body armor anyway.

I'm sure the Army and the uniform manufacturers are working hard to make the ACU a better uniform, so let's give them a chance. If we complain too much, the next time we need something upgraded, no one will listen.

Ed Watson
via e-mail

Not Just Recruiters

I ENJOY reading **Soldiers**, and I like the variety of articles that you publish.

However, I have to take exception to the statement made on the inside cover of the February issue. The statement read "...without the valuable work done by recruiters, the Army could not attract and retain quality Soldiers."

While recruiters do an outstanding job attracting new Soldiers, it is career counselors and re-enlistment NCOs who retain the Soldiers once they're on active duty.

MSG Robert V. Sluss
Via e-mail

CRSC Age Requirement

THANKS for publishing the March article on Combat Related Special Compensation; we appreciate the coverage.

However, we noted that the article stated that applicants must be age 60 or older. This is inaccurate, in that the age 60 requirement pertains only to Reservists.

Again, we appreciate your publishing the article and thereby helping to spread the word about this valuable military benefit.

Amy C. Schossler
via e-mail

Kudos on Medical Focus

CONGRATULATIONS on your special medical coverage in the March issue. It's the best issue of **Soldiers** I've seen in two decades.

I especially enjoyed Heike Hasenauer's detailed look at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center. The coverage on how the Army cares for amputees was also exceptional, and the story about R&R in Garmisch was a nice counterpoint to the trauma focus.

My only recommendation is that you should have included a sidebar on the two superbly run Fisher houses at LRMCC — they often make the difference in the road to recovery for our military members and their families.

COL Ben W. Weiner
Via e-mail

Soldiers values your opinion

To comment, keep your remarks to under 150 words, include your name, rank and address and send them to:

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Iraq

Soldiers from Company A, 3rd Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, prepare to unload two armored Caterpillar D9 bulldozers from their carriers at Al Butoma.

— Photo by SPC Jose Ferrufino.



▲ Germany

SGT Derwood Sloan, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the 123rd Main Support Battalion's Driver's Academy and a Soldier with the 123rd MSB, tests out a simulator in a demonstration at the system's new location at Anderson Barracks in Dexheim.

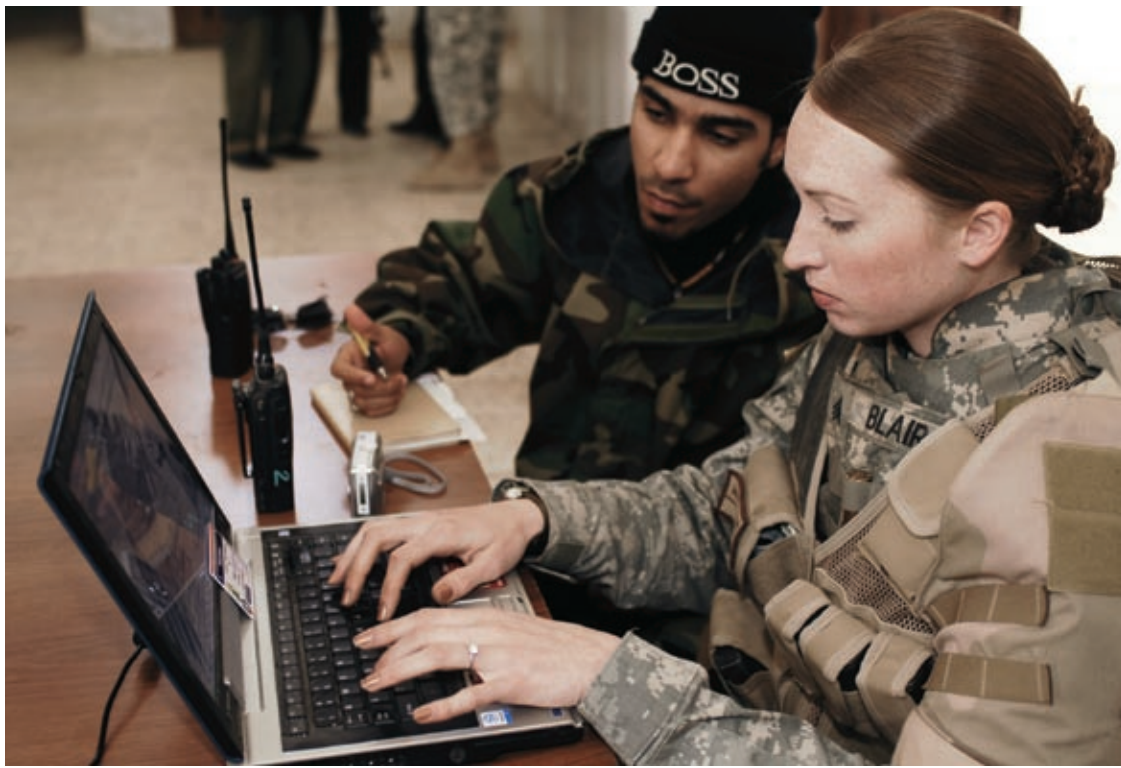
— Photo by SPC Jennifer McFadden



▲ Djibouti

A Soldier stands guard while a Marine Corps CH-53 helicopter offloads distinguished visitors in Quaddi for the dedication of a school.

— Photo by SSgt. Nic Raven, USAF



▲ Iraq

Working with the assistance of an Iraqi translator, SGT Sarah L. Blair of the 987th Military Police Co. logs information on Iraqi policemen into a computer at an Iraqi police station.

— Photo by Jeremy L. Wood



▲ Philippines

SSG Dean Bliablias of Co. C, 1st Bn., 185th Infantry Regiment, joins other U.S. and Filipino troops during combined training at Fort Magsaysay, in Cabanatuan, undertaken as part of Exercise Balikatan 2006.

— Photo by SrA Jacqueline Kabluyen, USAF



▲ Ethiopia

SSG Chuck McDermott, attached to the Fort Bragg, N.C.-based 96th Civil Affairs Battalion, talks to local Ethiopians after inspecting a water pump in the Gode Zone.

— Photo by SSgt. Ricky A. Bloom, USAF

The Heart of Army Installations

Story by Beth Reece

If money equaled happiness, Lisa Lawrence would get a job.

“No paid position in the world would allow me to be as happy as I am now. Volunteering has given me so much — the ability to grow and learn, and flexibility that I’d otherwise never have,” she said.

A registered nurse, Lawrence has volunteered in emergency rooms and given classes with the Red Cross. She began volunteering for the Army in support of her husband, helping the unit’s Family Readiness Group, or FRG.

“I fell in love with everything about the Army,” she said, and she eventually extended her organizational skills to help the Army Family Team Building program.

Volunteers do so much on military installations that some organizations probably wouldn’t exist without their unpaid, selfless work. They assist in tax offices; encourage and mentor wounded Soldiers at military hospitals; teach English; challenge children through Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts; spruce up churches and even help residents of military housing voice their concerns through mayoral programs.

Contributions by volunteers of programs affiliated with the U.S. Com-

munity and Family Support Center were valued at more than \$11 million in fiscal year 2005, said Vicki Brown, chief of the Army Family Enrichment Division at CFSC. Of all Army spouses, 28.8 percent are volunteers, she added.

“Army volunteers have been an integral part of the Army for as long as there have been Soldiers and families living in communities. Through their dedicated service, they stabilize Army communities by contributing to community cohesion, increasing self-reliance and enhancing the well-being of our Soldiers and their families,” Brown said.

Long deployments have increased the need for volunteers willing to support families left behind, to keep up the momentum of daily operations and to show those deployed that America supports them through care packages and letters.

For Our Families

FRGs are command-sponsored organizations of volunteers who provide mutual support, friendship and a link to the chain of command. FRGs help families cope and grow during Soldiers’ deployment, and are often family members’ first encounter with

Army Community Services Community and



▲ Public School 104's principal, Marie DiBella, joins students and Soldiers from Fort Hamilton, N.Y., in assembling grocery baskets for neighborhood families last Thanksgiving.

the spirit of volunteerism on Army installations.

Such family programs as AFTB and Child and Youth Services also showcase the work volunteers do throughout Army communities. Through AFTB, volunteers build self-sufficiency in family members through lessons on such military subjects as benefits and entitlements, and the impact of the Army's mission on family life.

Because these volunteers have experienced the trials of military life themselves — and many of them have seen how different approaches

to the same programs work in numerous communities — family members gain insight from volunteers' broad perspectives.

"We live the same life they do, and that gives us extra credibility as facilitators," Lawrence said.

Not just "helping hands" who work behind the scenes, volunteers are skilled professionals sharing their expertise in some of the Army's most visible programs.

"Standing in front of 20 or 30 people and giving them each a chance to speak and learn from one another is a lot of hard work. You're exhausted by the end of the day, but it's exhilarating because you know you're making a difference," said Lawrence.

Many of the programs through which volunteers contribute are es-

sential for improving the quality of life. The Army Family Action Plan, for example, began in 1983 when spouses from throughout the Army met to identify concerns of their fellow community members. Today, AFAP boosts well-being by ensuring issues are addressed at local levels and, if necessary, taken as far up the chain of command as Department of Army-level. But the program is still managed largely by unpaid volunteers.

For Our Soldiers

The desire to support Soldiers fighting the war on terrorism seems contagious — so much so that it's inspired people who'd never before volunteered to suddenly lend a hand.

At Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, volunteers

Giessen Elementary School in Germany had 75 registered volunteers. According to Christina Hayes, president of the school's Parent Teacher Organization, the school wouldn't be the same without them.

are so eager to help at the Soldier and Family Assistance Center that some are on waiting lists.

"These Soldiers are going overseas to fight our battles, and when they come home they're fighting to heal from their injuries. I want to do whatever I can to make their lives easier," said Irene Meadows, president of the BAMC Auxiliary.

Because Fort Sam Houston becomes a home-away-from-home for families of injured Soldiers, volunteers help locate temporary housing, transportation and banks. What people seem to appreciate the most about volunteers are their friendly faces, said Teresa Parker, an SFAC volunteer.

"We do whatever we can to help make their days better. It's not about money for us — it's our way of saying 'thanks,'" she said. "I've been an Army wife for 28 years and the Army has been good to me, so it makes me feel great to contribute."

Tony Meyer manages BAMC's Care Mobile Program, through which



44 volunteers chauffeur patients from their cars in the center's several-acre parking lot to the center's doors.

"We're the first people visitors see, and we're very proud of that. Our volunteers are retirees and spouses, ages 55 to 86. Some of our drivers have been doing this for 13 years, and they're still just as excited about helping as the day they started," he said.

While many volunteer on a weekly or even daily basis, others contribute occasionally. Volunteers from the Defense Commissary Agency recently crocheted baby blankets and donated them to the New Parent Support Program at Fort Lee, Va., for example.

"For the young mothers who don't have family members in the area, these personally made blankets will turn out to be special gifts," said Ashley Barton, NPSP manager.

Last year, Giessen Elementary School in Germany had 75 registered volunteers. According to Christina Hayes, president of the school's Parent Teacher Organization, the school wouldn't be the same without them.

"They help in classrooms, work on special projects and in the nurse's office; they hold PTSA positions; they chair events like Winter Wonderland and the Spelling Bee contest," she said. "If we didn't have all these volunteers, a lot would not happen in the school."

▶ Soldiers volunteer to help pack 5,501 Hero-to-Hero T-shirts at Camp Murray, Wash., for shipment to deployed Soldiers.



Barbara L. Sellers

Volunteers often seek experience to add to their resumes or to stay current in fields where there are no paid positions available in their communities.

"I recommend volunteering to other family members every day," said Julie McRee, who volunteers at Fort Carson, Colo. "It helps us gain marketable skills and develop our leadership potential. I've often seen volunteers turn their work into paying jobs."

Beyond that, volunteering gives spouses who forgo a paycheck in order to stay home with growing children a feeling of productivity. It also creates a sense of connectivity.

"If you're involved with the life you're living, you're going to be much happier and have a better understanding of what's going on around you," said McRee.

From Americans Everywhere

People wanting to support Soldiers and their families are not limited to those who live and work on Army installations. Americans who've never met a Soldier have found ways to show their pride and offer support through such groups as the United Service Organization and the American Red Cross.

USO volunteers greet travelers in airports around the world, offering free snacks and arranging transporta-

tion to nearby military facilities. USO volunteers have also logged countless hours stuffing care packages bound for deployed troops.

With more than a million volunteers constituting 97 percent of its workforce, the American Red Cross operates chapters at military installations and hospitals throughout the world.

They are most known for relaying emergency messages regarding the death of a loved one or the

birth of a child, but Red Cross volunteers also provide babysitting, CPR and first-aid training,

among many other contributions on military installations. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, volunteers organized and conducted blood drives on installations throughout the United States.

For all the help Soldiers receive from families and fellow Americans, they, too, seek the chance to help. Members of the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers group recently spent a Sunday morning pulling trash



▲ SGT Sid Sayavong of the 746th Quartermaster Battalion joins civilian volunteers at the Van Nuys, Calif., National Guard armory to assemble care packages for Soldiers overseas.

from the Seemenbach River that runs through Büdingen, Germany.

"I think of community service as a way to help someone else and yourself, as well as a way of expressing yourself," said SPC Robert Graham, the squadron's BOSS representative and cleanup organizer. "Many Soldiers have interests that are not actively engaged by military service. Community service allows these Soldiers to take part in something that will give them a feeling of accomplishment."

Whoever the volunteer, whatever the work, the contributions are priceless, said Kim Taylor, Army Volunteer Corps coordinator at Fort Sam Houston, where volunteers logged 236,000 hours of work last year.

"It's hard to say where we'd be without volunteers," she said. "They are truly the heart of the installation, and it wouldn't be the same without them." 📺

VOLUNTEERS

Serving with Distinction

Story by Ron Joy

AS they have throughout history, American women continue to serve their country with distinction, no matter what the crisis or situation.

Today, several women who work for the Installation Management Agency's Southwest Region Office are serving as Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom volunteers alongside their male counterparts.

Among the volunteers are SWRO's Lynda Austin-Reed, Leslie Christopoulos, and Anne Ferguson. Austin-Reed will soon be heading to Iraq, Christopoulos is on her way to Afghanistan, and Ferguson just returned to San Antonio from a year-long assignment in the Balkans.

Ron Joy is with the Southwest Region Installation Management Agency Public Affairs Office.

Into Iraq

Lynda Austin-Reed is one of the original members of the task force for IMA SWR, which began operations in May 2002. After more than three years as SWRO's chief of budget integration she was looking for a new challenge, both professionally and personally, she said.

Austin-Reed left San Antonio in November 2005 and headed for the journey of a lifetime, working for six months as a Corps of Engineers program manager near Camp Anaconda.

While the job is a bit out of the ordinary for a civilian mother of three, Austin-Reed said she believes it's important that she become personally involved in what is happening in Iraq.

"I need to do what I can to help. We've sent a lot of young people to Iraq, and they deserve our support. By taking this assignment I feel like I'm helping to keep a young Soldier out of harm's way," said Austin-Reed.

"The decision to volunteer for reassignment was not made lightly, but was a decision that felt right. It still does," she said.



Lynda Austin-Reed

Afghanistan Bound

Leslie Christopoulos joined the SWRO team more than two years ago as an environmental protection specialist, and is currently the executive officer to the IMA SWR director.

Christopoulos has been around the military all her life, not living in one place for more than five and a half years. As the daughter of an Air Force pilot, she has seen the faces of young men and women heading to war.

"I remember what happened during Vietnam," she said. "That's why I want to make sure our Soldiers going to Iraq or Afghanistan don't have the same

problems we faced when I was growing up. I know what it's like to have someone you care about serving in a dangerous place.

"When I watched these kids getting on airplanes headed to Iraq and Afghanistan, I knew that I had to do something about it. If my being there will prevent one young person from going, that's a good-enough reason for me to do it," Christopoulos added.

She left for a yearlong tour in Afghanistan in December 2005. While she knew she'd be working as a project manager for the Army Corps

Back From the Balkans

During the summer of 2004, Anne Ferguson was working as SWRO's lead safety specialist, a job she really enjoyed. But she still felt that something was missing. She didn't have the opportunity to work directly with Soldiers anymore, and it bothered her not doing "hands-on" and "in-the-field" work. In her position at SWRO, most of the people she works with are Army civilians.

Then a government announcement revealed an opportunity Ferguson could not resist. A safety and occupational health specialist was needed at Camp Bondsteel, near the small town of Ferizaj/Urosevac, Kosovo. With the blessing of her husband, Barry, she jumped at the chance to make a difference.

This isn't the first time Ferguson has been deployed. In 1996 she was sent to Hungary for four months, and then two years later she found herself working in Israel. This was in between temporary-duty assignments to the Balkans and other areas of Europe while working for the U.S. Army, Europe.

Before Ferguson left for Kosovo in early October 2004, she set three goals to accomplish while she was gone.

The first was personal. She wanted to lose weight and get into better shape. She accomplished this through a rigorous work-out program.

The second goal was financial. By working in what is still considered a hostile environment she received financial incentives, which she used to help towards her future retirement plans.

The final goal was to work with Soldiers again. Ferguson found this goal the most exciting of all three. "Being in Kosovo was extremely rewarding be-

cause I had a chance to see my work come to fruition right before my eyes," she said. "One of the most important things I can say about my year in Kosovo is that we didn't have any fatalities."


Ferguson says the experience was a good one and if her husband and dog were allowed to join her there, she would have stayed longer. "Some DA civilians who have family members living at American facilities in Germany have worked in Kosovo since the late 1990s," she said.



Ann Ferguson

Making a Difference

Each of the three SWRO women gave or will be giving of themselves. They also are proving women of today are strong — strong in their beliefs; strong in their abilities; strong in their desires to help; have strong and giving hearts; and hold strong American values.

Much like American women of the past, these professionals are making a difference regardless of their backgrounds. 



of Engineers, she wasn't sure exactly what she'd be doing or where she'd be based.

Christopoulos likened today's war-theater female volunteers to the thousands of "Rosie the Riveter" women who worked in factories and other defense-related jobs during World War II. While today's women have long been part of the civilian war effort, civilians "downrange" still face major cultural challenges in places such as Iraq. Nonetheless, Christopoulos is eager to do her part as a deployed Army civilian.



Leslie Christopoulos

VOLUNTEERS

Operation Gratitude

Story and Photos by WO1 Marc Yablonka

THE sounds of 1950s classics like Del Shannon's hit "Runaway" reverberated off the walls of the California Army National Guard armory in Van Nuys, home to the 746th Quartermaster Battalion, as hundreds of volunteers of Operation Gratitude reached an incredible milestone.

The group — a nonprofit organization that has been sending care packages and letters of support to service members serving overseas since the beginning of operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom — stuffed its 100,000th mailer in December 2005.

For 15 weekends in a row Operation Gratitude volunteers crammed packages full of items ranging from disposable cameras to pens, snacks and thank-you notes from school children.

The volunteers — from senior citizens with sons and daughters serving overseas to kids who might someday wear their country's uniform — have been spending those weekends with our nation's servicemen and women, if only in their thoughts.

Operation Gratitude founder Carolyn Blashek held back tears as she spoke to the

several hundred volunteers and troops who attended the 100,000th-mailer event.

"This sends a very strong message to the troops," she said. "It expresses the appreciation, support, love and respect of millions of people who care."

Blashek has cared ever since Sept. 11, 2001, after which she went to work at the Bob Hope USO Club at Los Angeles International Airport.

Blashek said that in 2003 a Soldier came into the club and broke down at her desk. He was home on leave to attend his mother's funeral. If that weren't enough, his wife had walked out on him, and his only child, a baby, had died.

"I'm going back over there," the Soldier told her. "I don't think I'll make it back this time, but it really doesn't matter because no one would ever notice." It was then that Blashek knew she had to do more than she had been doing to support the troops. That was the beginning of Operation Gratitude.

Through her efforts, many corporate sponsors have been equally moved to participate, including the Chrysler Corp. — which agreed to allow its Jeep dealerships to become drop-off points for donations — and the Subway fast-food chain, which has offered food for the hundreds of volunteers who assist with the operation.

Someone she didn't have to apply the hard sales approach to was SSG Elizabeth Cowie of the 746th QM Bn., who, before meeting Blashek, had been doing a little personal "military stocking stuffing" of her own with friends serving overseas.

Together, Cowie and Blashek transformed the program from an "at-home" effort operating out of Blashek's living room to the nonprofit agency it is today. Along the way they enlisted corporate assistance from such companies as Ocean Spray, Newman's Own, Coppertone, Dr. Scholl's,



▶ Working at the Van Nuys armory, Operation Gratitude volunteers fill care packages with such items as pens, candy and toothbrushes.



▲ CSM Robert Liles presents a photo of the Multi-National Headquarters to SSG Elizabeth Cowie and Carolyn Blashek.

Universal Home Video and Sony USA.

These and other businesses donated either 10,000 items or \$10,000, Blashek said.

"The energy in this armory is overwhelming," Cowie said. "If you listen to the media, you hear that the people don't support the troops, but when you look around here, you know that's not the case. People have flown in from as far away as Hawaii to help out. One Texas couple even bought plane tickets for each other for their

anniversary present so that they could fly out and volunteer."

The volunteerism was not lost on the Guard members, who drop by on non-drill weekends to help out.

"This is great, because when I was on active duty, we didn't have this program," said the 746th's SGT Dennis Murillo. "When we were overseas we got cards and packages from our significant others and friends. It's great to see the whole country supporting the Soldiers. That's what this program's all about. Showing support means everything."

Another Soldier from the 746th, SGT Sid Sayavong, who also served in Afghanistan, echoed Murillo's sentiments.

"It's great to help out the Soldiers. When I was in Afghanistan, I got a care package, and it feels great for me to be

helping out the troops while I'm here at home," he said.

Someone who has seen the results of Operation Gratitude from the other side of the Atlantic is CSM Robert Liles, formerly with the 746th QM Bn. He's recently returned from Iraq, where he served with the 250th Military Intelligence Bn. When he first arrived in Baghdad, he said, there were about 250 Operation Gratitude packages in front of him on the ground.

"It was quite a sight," Liles said. "It's overwhelming that Americans are willing to take time away from their weekends to do this. It's more than just backing us."


As a token of his appreciation to Blashek and the entire Operation Gratitude organization, Liles presented her with a photo of the Multi-National Forces Building in Baghdad, as well as the American flag that flew atop it during his time in-country.

For Blashek, Cowie and the volunteers of Operation Gratitude, the care and understanding seem to have no end. They'll continue stuffing and sending out their packages until there is no one left to send them to. 🇺🇸




▲ Carolyn Blashek's husband, Ron, shows a volunteer the certificate of appreciation Carolyn received from Donald Rumsfeld.

VOLUNTEERS



SGT John Rogers of Headquarters and HQs. Troop, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment, loads a round during sniper training at Fort Lewis, Wash.

Home on



ON a rainy weekend afternoon when most Soldiers had the day off, 24 students hoping to earn the B4 additional skill identifier were going through the Basic Sniper Course at Fort Lewis, Wash. They were trying to get some good DOPE — daily observations of previous engagements — on Range 22.

Jason Kaye is a writer with the Northwest Guardian at Fort Lewis, Wash.

The Soldiers, from the 2nd Cavalry Regiment and the 3rd Brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division, were being trained by a mobile training team from the sniper school at Fort Benning, Ga.

“The course we brought with us to Fort Lewis is different from the resident course at Fort Benning, so it’s more high-stress,” said SSG Jason Smith, the MTT NCOIC from the 2nd Bn., 29th Inf. “We’ve got guys from different services attending, so they

the Range

Story and Photos by Jason Kaye



▶ PFC Ross Garner (left) and PFC Ray Henderson, both of HHC, 2nd Bn., 3rd Inf. Regt., engage a target on Range 22 as instructors from Fort Benning look on.

get a lot of ‘this is how we do it in our unit.’ Students at Fort Benning also get to shoot on ranges they’ve never shot on before, so the training is the same but the experience is different.”

Smith said that to get Fort Benning MTT instructors to travel to another installation to train snipers, all a unit has to do is pay four peoples’ TDY costs for four weeks. In exchange, the unit gets 14 to 24 Soldiers trained.

“If the unit sends Soldiers to the resident course, training the same 24 people might take a year, and cost more in travel expenses and mission readiness,” Smith said.”

Besides hosting the four instructors, units usually provide six to eight sniper-qualified Soldiers to help the instructors.

For the students, training on home turf offers several advantages.

“You’re familiar with the area and you’re comfortable with the assistant instructors because they’re guys you know and work with,” said SGT Matt Young, an assistant instructor from Company C, 5th Bn., 20th Inf.

“I think one of the biggest advantages of doing Sniper School here is that we’re getting ideas about where we can conduct our own sniper training and how we can accomplish that here. You get a good overall idea about where to go and what to do,”

said SGT John Rogers, an assistant instructor from Headquarters and HQs. Troop, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Cav. Regt.

Training at home station can also provide some challenges, especially in the Northwest during the winter.

“Weather always presents a huge challenge. The rain makes it difficult to use our optics,” Young said. “On top of that, it’s miserable.”

The Soldiers made the best of the conditions and hunkered down in their wet-weather gear on Range 22, taking turns as shooter or spotter from distances of 400, 500 and 600 meters.

“We preach teamwork — without the spotter the shooter can’t shoot. We say ‘one shot, one kill,’ but it’s more or less ‘one shot and make a good adjustment to get a kill.’ It takes a lot of practice to get to the point where you can get that way,” Smith said.

During the course the students are graded on four qualification ranges.

▶ SSG Jason Smith, a member of the Fort Benning mobile training team visiting Fort Lewis, hangs a target on Range 22.

The first is on an unknown-distance range, using the DOPE they gathered throughout the course. Then they engage moving targets at 300, 400, 500 and 600 meters, both day and night. Finally, they qualify with the M-107 .50-caliber sniper rifle.

In addition to shooting and spotting, the snipers also learn stalking techniques and how to conduct operations in urban terrain.

Smith and Young were both looking forward to the MOUT training.

“Up here we have Leschi Town, which is awesome, and it’s going to be really beneficial for us to train there. That’s the way we fight wars now — in cities, unfortunately,” said Young, whose unit will soon deploy.

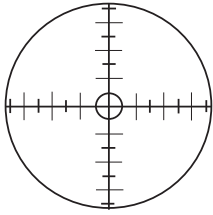
The instructors from Fort Benning also teach a weeklong sniper-employment course for officers [see *accompanying story*].

“We put a lot of emphasis on getting to and finding the target, and getting the correct range to the target without using any means but the gun, camouflage and our imagination,” said Smith. 🚩





▲ Sniper students from 3rd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div., and the 2nd Cav. Regt. engage targets together during day five of their training.



PUTTING SNIPER ROUNDS ON-TARGET

Story and Photos by Jason Kaye

SOMETIME during an operation to rescue downed Kiowa pilots in Tal Afar, Iraq, the enemy decided that the prospect of facing Stryker-mounted .50-caliber machine guns was better than taking chances with the snipers of the Fort Lewis, Wash.,-based 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry.

"All in all, we shot about 300 rounds with all the long guns. After the first 15 minutes of covering the street, the enemy started running towards where the machine guns were firing. They wouldn't even come towards us," said SGT James Brown, a senior sniper from the unit, who





▶ SSG Jason Smith instructs PFC Ross Garner of Headquarters and HQs. Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, during stalk training.

▶ SGT John Sutherland of Co. C, 5th Bn., 20th Inf. Regt., takes aim during a stalk session that required students to find each other.

was on a rooftop that day.

Brown passed on his knowledge recently as one of seven Soldiers from 3rd Brigade and the 2nd Cavalry Regiment who assisted cadre from

Fort Benning, Ga., with the instruction of a new class of Army snipers. The team came to Fort Lewis, Wash., after being sponsored by Brown's unit.

Class 702-06 started with 24 Soldiers, but after 377 hours of instruction 17 stood tall during their graduation ceremony on February 5. The graduates qualified with the M-24 and M-107, learned sniper marksmanship, stalking techniques, range estimation, target detection, identification and construction of hide positions, and other field craft that keeps the sniper



ahead of the enemy.

"This training was extremely important to the brigade's combat readiness and has significantly increased our capabilities," said MAJ Adam L. Rocke,

3rd Bde. S-3. "Being a sniper takes a special kind of Soldier with unique qualities, and each of the brigade's units will greatly benefit from the precision-marksmanship skills that these men now bring to the fight."

Snipers, however, haven't always been appreciated. A look back at their history shows an ebb and flow that matches this country's conflicts. Their number and training are always a low priority during peacetime, but during war their demand and use increases.

SSG Jason Smith, NCO in charge

"Faced with the current situations in Iraq and Afghanistan, officials are starting to appreciate the skilled marksmen coming out of the sniper school."

of the cadre team from Fort Benning, said that five years ago not every class at the resident course was full; now they turn people away.

"Faced with the current situations in Iraq and Afghanistan, officials are starting to appreciate the skilled marksmen coming out of the sniper school, and they are in demand more than ever," added Blaine Souerwine, a contract instructor from Fort Benning. "The precision fires of snipers are an added bonus that can tremendously affect the enemy's psyche."

"Seeing a guy get dropped every time a shot is fired has a major psychological effect on the enemy," said Brown. "If you're doing a show of force or presence operation and the enemy sees you placing a position, it changes his whole disposition. He's more apt to relax and stay mellow. The enemy won't get into big crowds, because he knows we can pick him out of those crowds."

The snipers' skills go beyond that of skilled marksmen. Many people, even some of the current students, think that the sniper's only addition to a unit is that of a sharpshooter.



Students fire for qualification with the M-107 .50-caliber rifle on Range 52. The students had to qualify with both the M-107 and the smaller M-24 rifle.



▲ Blaine Souerwine (center) a contract instructor from Fort Benning, talks to students in Sniper Class 702-06 about urban hide positions during training at Fort Lewis's Leschi Town MOUT complex.

"I thought we'd just come out here and shoot, but I learned a lot more than I thought I was going to," said SGT Justin Mongold, one of the class graduates and a member of Company A, 1st Bn., 23rd Inf.

Reconnaissance, target acquisition and damage assessment are also skills snipers bring to the table.

"We give a unit a different edge. You don't always need a door kicker or a squad just to bust into a room. You might need to take out — or 'get eyes on,' just one person," Mongold said.

It isn't enough to have trained snipers in the unit. You have to have leaders who know how to take advantage of the snipers' skills. During the team's stop at Fort Lewis, about 50 leaders from the 3rd Bde. and 2nd Cav. Regt. attended a sniper-employment class. Classes like the Sniper-

Employment Officers' Course help develop unit SOPs for the use of snipers.

"It used to be part of the Infantry Officers Basic Course, but now we teach the latter as a separate class for staff sergeants and above," said Smith.

"Commanders are slowly becoming educated about using snipers to their best advantage," said Souerwine. The snipers themselves hope that this trend continues.


"I think there needs to be more concentration on sustainment training, and snipers need to be allowed to operate to their fullest potential," Brown said. "We know that this is a risky job, but everybody's here despite that." ■

▶ PFC Levi Smith of Headquarters and HQs. Troop, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment, peers through the scope of his M-24 from a hide position during the training he and other students underwent at Leschi Town.





The Many **Faces**



Precision and discipline are necessities for members of the U.S. Army Drill Team, one element of the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard).

SGT Jeremy Kern

of The Old Guard

Story by SPC Brian K. Parker



SMALL American flags flutter in the wind as Soldiers of the nation's oldest active infantry regiment, the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard), place them in front of Soldiers' gravestones at Arlington National Cemetery.

The pre-Memorial Day ritual is performed by members of the other armed services, too, to honor those interred at Arlington and all service members who have died in the nation's service.

Created in 1784 as the First American Regiment, The Old Guard was established after the Paris Peace Treaty of 1783, which stipulated that the United States would maintain a military force to protect land west of the Appalachian Mountains.

After the First American Regiment participated in the War of 1812, COL John Miller took command. Because



SPC Brian K. Parker works in the 3rd U.S. Inf. (The Old Guard) Public Affairs Office.



he was ranked third most-senior officer in the Army, the unit designation became the 3rd U.S. Inf., in keeping with Miller's status, said Kirk M. Heflin, the director of the 3rd U.S. Inf. (The Old Guard) Museum.

The 3rd Inf. played a vital role in the Mexican War in 1846, Heflin said. After taking Mexico City, the unit had the honor of marching at the head of its brigade as the American troops entered the Mexican capital.

"It was there that the Army commander, MG Zachary Taylor, turned to his staff as the 3rd Inf. passed and said, 'Gentlemen, take

▲ In observance of Memorial Day, Soldiers of The Old Guard place small American flags in front of tombstones at Arlington National Cemetery.

off your hats to The Old Guard of the Army,'" said Heflin.

Today The Old Guard, which has proven its worth in battle, has a two-fold mission — to protect America's capital and to pay final tribute to America's heroes.

"We're responsible for representing the Army in joint and Army ceremonies, special events and memorial affairs," said COL Bob Pricone, regimental commander of The Old Guard. "We also have a responsibility to develop junior leaders, to prepare them to go back out to the divisional units."

And, as a result of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center

◀ Whether in current or historical uniform, members of The Old Guard pay close attention to detail.

and the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001, The Old Guard also supports the Joint Force Headquarters-National Capital Region in emergencies.

The line companies, A through D, of 1st Battalion, 3rd Inf. Regt., represent The Old Guard in many of the ceremonies and all of the memorial affairs in which The Old Guard participates, and support contingency missions throughout the national capital region.

They include the Commander-in-Chief's Guard, a company-sized element fashioned after GEN George Washington's Continental Army. The CINC's Guard dresses in Revolutionary War-era clothing and demonstrates the weapons and tactics of the time.

Each company goes through a rotational system that dictates what its tasks will be at any given time. "Primary cycle" is when the line companies participate in funeral processions.

When a company is in primary, it is split up between standard funerals and full-honor funerals, with standard funerals consisting of seven to 15 Soldiers, and more than 40 Soldiers for a full-honor funeral, said SGT William R. Fritsche of Co. B.



"We get our weapons early and practice firing for about an hour before a funeral," said SPC Vance Meier, a member of the firing party of Co. D. "Then we prepare our uniforms and make sure everyone is squared away. "When we march down to the

▲ In addition to their ceremonial duties, Soldiers of The Old Guard must maintain their proficiency in normal infantry skills.

▼ The Old Guard's Presidential Salute Battery executes some 300 missions each year.

SGT Jeremy Kern





▲ Members of The Old Guard's Fife and Drum Corps don distinctive Revolutionary War-period uniforms for their presentations.

gravesite, all I can think about is being flawless,” Meier said. “I make sure my weapon is straight and everything is in line. In the summer, I have to use an alternate set of dress blues, because by the end of the day, the first pair is soaked in sweat.”

While much of The Old Guard's mission involves preparing for and participating in funerals — as does the Caisson Platoon, a unit that uses six horses to pull a flag-draped casket on a black artillery caisson in funeral processions — other of The Old Guard's assets include the Fife and Drum Corps, the U.S. Army Drill Team, the Continental Color Guard, the Presidential Salute Battery and the Tomb

Sentinels who guard the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

The Fife and Drum Corps is the only unit of its kind in the Defense Department. Musicians in the unit wear red coats that recall the days of the American Revolution.

Reaching out to the public is a main objective of not only the FDC, but also the drill team, Pricone said.

For more than 45 years, members of the USADT, with their bayonet-tipped 1903 Springfield rifles, have acted as good-will ambassadors for the Army by participating in major military and civic functions.

Soldiers are selected for the team after six months of competitive and rigorous drill practice.

The Presidential Salute Battery, which can also be seen at Arlington National Cemetery firing the final salutes during funerals, also renders honors for visiting foreign dignitaries and heads of state at the White House, the Pentagon and other locations in the nation's capital.

As the only indirect-fire infantrymen in the regiment, the Guns Platoon is equipped with eight 3-inch, World War II-era anti-tank guns mounted on a 105mm howitzer chassis. Each gun weighs 5,775 pounds and fires 75mm blank shells with 1.5 pounds of gunpowder, said platoon sergeant SFC Danzell Harrell.

“We take great pride in having top-notch equipment and keeping it looking good,” said Harrell, who supervises some 40 Soldiers.

Attention to detail is vital in all the specialty platoons, including the Continental Color Guard.

With crisp, concise movements, the CCG has a heritage that dates back to Colonial days.

The five-man team consists of two armed guards and three color-guard ensigns who carry the U.S. flag, the U.S. Army flag, and the flag of The Old Guard. The armed guards flank the colors and are responsible for protecting the U.S. flag.

The specialty platoons often work seven days a week performing highly

SPC Brian K. Parker



visible public missions. One such specialty platoon is the Tomb Sentinels at The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

The Old Guard assumed responsibility for the tomb in 1948, following the unit's reactivation in the nation's capital.

While on duty, a tomb sentinel takes exactly 21 steps to cross a 63-foot rubber-surfaced walkway. He then faces the tomb for 21 seconds, turns again, and pauses for 21 more seconds before repeating his steps. The number 21 is symbolic of the highest salute afforded to dignitaries in military and state ceremonies.

“The professionalism, discipline and intestinal fortitude required to execute such an extremely sensitive but important mission at the tomb is amazing. The Soldiers at the Tomb have done an amazing job representing our nation and our Army,” Pricone said.

“The regiment is expected to give



SPC Brian K. Parker

- ▲ One of the most widely recognized elements of The Old Guard, the Caisson Platoon takes part in funeral processions for both the great and the lowly.
- ▶ Tomb sentinels at Arlington's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier take exactly 21 steps to cross a 63-foot, rubber-surfaced walkway.

110 percent to each of its missions,” Pricone said, whether it be memorial affairs, ceremonies and special events, emergency response or deployment to a contingency operation.

The 1st Bn.’s Co. B deployed to such a contingency operation in December 2003, to Djibouti, Africa, in support of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Fritsch, who served with Co. B during the deployment, said that missions in the region included force protection and civil affairs, and training in joint operations with other U.S. and regional military forces. 🇺🇸



NCOs



at IADC

Story and Photos by JO1 Paul Newell, USN



▲ A Venezuelan navy captain, a student at the IADC, hands his passport to SSG Lionel Velez-Soto, a human resources NCO at the school.



IN the heart of Washington, D.C., on one of the Army's oldest posts, sits a multinational learning institution that many Soldiers have never heard of.

The Inter-American Defense College is located at Fort Lesley J. McNair, against a backdrop of dense

trees, a sprawling parade field and the tranquil Potomac River.

Settled on the Army's third oldest post (only Carlisle Barracks in Pennsylvania and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., are older), the IADC is a joint and international military senior-service college, born from the Inter-American Defense Board and the Organization of American States in 1962.

Since the college's creation, almost 3,000 men and women from virtually every country in the Western Hemisphere have attended the IADC as a stepping-stone in their political or military careers.

Army NCOs help to ensure that these diplomats and senior internation-

JO1 Paul Newell is a photojournalist with the Inter-American Defense Board.



▲ The building that houses the Inter-American Defense College was built as a barracks in 1903. Fort McNair is the Army's third-oldest post, following Carlisle Barracks, Pa., and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.

al military personnel receive the best possible experiences while they attend the school.

“Como esta usted?” SSG Lionel Velez-Soto asks a colonel from Chile, who has been having issues with his passport. As he continues the Spanish dialogue with the officer, the staff

sergeant from Puerto Rico quickly recognizes the nature of the problem and within minutes helps the officer resolve it.

The 12-year Army veteran said it's important that he and other NCOs at the school understand their customers, who are often flag-level officers and

foreign diplomats.

“The students who come to study here are from various countries, so I have to know how to deal with people from different cultures,” said Velez-Soto, a human resources NCO who supervises three joint-service sergeants.

“Just because I can speak Spanish



▲ SPC Jose Gonzalez, the school's graphic artist, helps construct an exhibit honoring distinguished graduates.



▲ IADC NCOs listen as the school's director, MG Keith M. Huber, talks with Colombian army Gen. Carlos Alberto Ospina at a reception in Bogota.

The Inter-American Defense College has three graduates who have become presidents of their respective countries...



with them doesn't mean I understand their culture or their way of handling business affairs. We have a friendly environment here, but we still have to demonstrate a great deal of tact," Valez-Soto said.

After studying at the IADC for 11 months, the students return to their respective countries with new perspectives from their neighbors that, in the big picture, contribute to peace and security throughout their region of the world.

Many IADC graduates go on to become general officers, defense ministers or ambassadors. In fact, the college has three graduates who have become presidents of their respective countries, including Dr. Michelle Bachelet, a 1997 graduate who recently won the presidency in Chile.

It is because of this high-profile environment that a general-officer level screening is required for the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen who want to work at IADC.

"Our NCOs bring their experiences

into an international community of 34 nations," said the IADC's president, MG Keith Huber. "They are critical role models for militaries from the Western Hemisphere, many of which do not fully employ their NCOs.

"I know our enlisted service members make a lasting impression, because I get feedback from officers and civilians from abroad who are amazed at the initiative and professionalism of our NCOs," Huber said.

Because of the need for cadre members who can communicate in English, Spanish and Portuguese, the Army compensates Soldiers by allotting pay for those who achieve a high-enough score on language tests.

"The Army is paying me for the language skills I possess," said SGT Laura Martinez, who is Huber's executive administrative assistant. Handling correspondence, phone calls, and letters from embassies and heads of state, Martinez works long hours making sure the general and his executive officers are prepared to successfully interact with the multinational student body.

"In the Latino culture there is a

certain way to express yourself, which is distinctly different from the North American way," said Martinez, who helps to ensure nothing's lost to "cultural" miscommunication.

The amount of responsibility shouldered by NCOs at the school has impressed the international soldiers who also work at the college, said Colombian Sgt. Maj. Delio Macias Rojas, a former sergeant major of the Colombian army. "The amount of decision making and planning the U.S. Army asks of its NCOs is impressive. They have logistical, tactical and administrative responsibilities that reveal the potential they possess."

The skills and responsibilities of the NCO support personnel at the IADC also extend beyond IADC. When a Soldier dies and is buried in a Hispanic country or territory, the Army often calls upon the Spanish-speaking Huber to represent the United States.

In February 2005 SSG Victorino Barrera accompanied Huber to Mexico, Barrera's birthplace, to bury a Soldier who died in Iraq. Barrera said the trip south of the border was



▲ (Main photo) SSG Victor Barrera (left) and MSG Hector Serrana help guide a funeral procession for PFC Jesus Fonseca in Degollado, Mexico. (Inset) IADC director Huber presents a flag and Fonseca's Purple Heart to his widow, Marlene.

perhaps the most difficult mission of his career.

"To return to my birthplace under those conditions was difficult," said Barrera, who handled the logistical responsibilities during the detail. "I had to look his widow and family in the eyes and explain to them that their beloved husband and son did not die in vain.

"Because the family is Mexican, they had to hear it from a Mexican. They heard it from someone who is not only proud to be Mexican, but who is also proud to be a U.S. Soldier," said Barrera.

Barrera, who is Huber's driver, also accompanies the general during study trips the college sponsors outside the United States. Last March, when IADC officials traveled to Ecuador and Colombia, Barrera and other support-team NCOs from all services dressed in business suits and worked behind the scenes to ensure that the two-week educational mission would be a success.

"It is our job to make sure the trips are well coordinated," said Puerto-Rican native SFC Victor Marrero, IADC's senior NCO and chief of logistics. "From arranging hotel

reservations for 100 students and staff to making sure planes are where they need to be, in this organization we have to come together not only as Soldiers, but as a joint family."

The eight Army NCOs who work at the IADC rely on one another and, with their joint counterparts, consider themselves family.

"We are not only united by culture," said SPC Jose Gonzalez, IADC's graphic designer, "we are all professionals who are enjoying the opportunity to make an impact on the lives of people in other parts of the world." 🇺🇸

FAST:

Field
Assistance in
Science and
Technology

Getting Soldiers What They Need

Story by Julie Cupernall



▲ Soldiers who worked with IEDs came to the FAST STAT team asking for a better gripping mechanism and extending arm for the TALON, a robot often used in IED detection and disposal. The FAST STAT team made it possible for the Soldiers to communicate their needs directly to engineers.

WHEN the rubber meets the road, no one on earth knows more about what Soldiers need than Soldiers.

The Army's Research, Development and Engineering Command recognizes that and is using part of its Field Assistance in Science and Technology, or FAST, Program to gain bet-

ter insight into the needs of Soldiers in combat.

Typically, each three-member FAST Science and Technology Assistance Team comprises an officer, NCO and civilian science advisor. A team's mission is easily stated: Find out what Soldiers need on the front lines, and give that information to the people who can fill that need.

"The key to the whole FAST STAT mission is to make sure we paint a good picture of the technology requirements the design engineer

in the research and development labs can work on," said MAJ Mike Traxler, who served as a FAST STAT team leader in Iraq from April to August 2005.

"The point is that the guy who knows the most about his needs is the user. He's the technology expert. He can't design it, he's not the technician, he's not the engineer, but he has a better grasp than any of us will ever have," Traxler said.

Of course, the simplest-sounding mission is often the most difficult to

Julie Cupernall works in the Research, Development and Engineering Command Public Communications Office.



▲ FAST STAT team members closely observe day-to-day maintenance tasks and mission preparation looking for feedback on current technologies and gaps that need to be filled.

achieve, especially when it revolves around the complex idea of communication.

This ability to translate Soldier needs to scientists and engineers far from the front lines takes weeks of intense training before deployment.

RDECOM is made up of eight national labs and engineering centers and nine international technol-

ogy centers, and employs more than 17,000 civilian, military and contract personnel — all working to quickly get technology to Soldiers.

FAST STAT team members must familiarize themselves with RDECOM labs and their technology focuses before they can talk with Soldiers. RDECOM labs test, create and work to improve almost everything Soldiers eat, shoot, wear, sleep in, drive in or use to protect themselves.

“We represent everything from aviation to peanut butter. It’s amazing how much we have to talk about,” said MAJ Jay Ferreira, who was in Iraq as a FAST team leader from December 2004 to April 2005.

Once deployed, FAST STAT teams spend most of their time in Iraq with the troops, watching and listening. Team members must be on the ground — shadowing day-to-day maintenance jobs and going out on actual missions to see Soldiers and their equipment in action.

The FAST STAT key to success is accessibility to Soldiers.

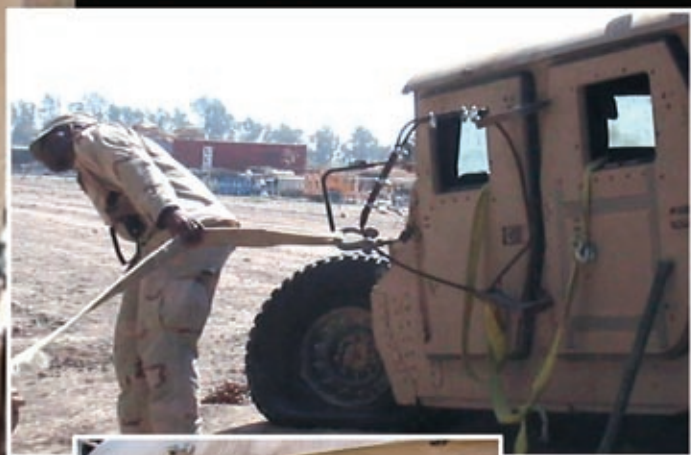
“We hosted a lot of group discussions. We went to the different base camps and arranged to have a group of 30 to 50 Soldiers get together in a room. Then we spent a lot of time finding out what they need to conduct their operations and which technologies may be able to support them,” Traxler added.

Detection and detonation of improvised explosive devices is a major discussion topic brought to FAST STAT teams. Soldier suggestions have led RDECOM scientists and engineers to produce an extending arm with a better gripping mechanism for the TALON robot, often used to search for improvised explosive devices. Soldiers asked for the arm extender to



▲ An adaptor allowing Soldiers to plug in to both mounted and dismounted radios is currently being tested in Iraq. The idea originated as a Soldier suggestion from a battalion commander.





▲ Soldiers of the 256th Brigade Combat Team approached a FAST STAT team in Iraq with a suggestion about how to quickly extract Soldiers from Humvees whose doors had been jammed. Their extraction bracket is now being tested on Humvees in Iraq.

allow the TALON to “look” into truck windows.

“When the Soldiers get something like that, it improves both safety and morale. They appreciate that someone is paying attention to their mission challenges,” Ferreira said.

Besides gathering information on the capabilities of current technolo-

gies, FAST STAT teams also provide new RDECOM technologies to a limited number of Soldiers to see how the technologies stand up outside the lab.

“This is one of the few times we can actually prove things out on the battlefield. Iraq is not a training center. So every time we provide prototypes and they come back broken, that’s okay. Soldiers need to run the technology through all the paces, to allow us to find out whether it has merit for the future fight,” Ferreira said.

One Stryker brigade battalion commander could help thousands of Soldiers because of a suggestion he made to a FAST STAT team. The commander recognized the need for an adaptor that allows the Soldier

to use both mounted and dismounted radios.

“This is a no-brainer, but the guys in the lab didn’t really know the need existed. The suggestion is coming from a battalion commander,



Have Suggestions?

RDECOM is seeking technology suggestions that may benefit Soldiers. Find out how to submit your ideas by going to **www.rdecom.army.mil** and clicking on “Research Proposals and Ideas” in the left margin.

➤ One of the most productive ways for FAST STAT team members to get feedback on RDECOM technologies is to hold group discussions in Iraq.

a proven leader and expert in his field,” Traxler said.

The universal adaptor suggestion went back to RDECOM’s Communications-Electronics, Research Development and Engineering Center at Fort Monmouth, N.J. About 100 of the new communications adaptors engineered at CERDEC were sent to Iraq to be evaluated.

The 256th Brigade Combat Team from Louisiana approached a FAST STAT team with a suggestion to help alleviate another problem on the front lines — getting Soldiers out of wrecked Humvees.

“Sometimes the door is damaged and you just can’t get it open. So their idea was to take the existing tow strap that comes with every combat vehicle, hook it up to the Humvee door with an extraction bracket that they designed, and just tear the door off. A very simple door bracket, a very simple concept,” Traxler said.

“It’s probably a five-dollar solution that doesn’t modify the Humvee. It came right from Soldiers,” Ferreira said.


The bracket is being tested on hundreds of Humvees in Iraq.

Sometimes solutions aren’t easily found, and the best solution might not be an improvement to existing technology or something

that’s taken off the shelf.

“The hundred-dollar idea is not always the best solution. That’s why this is so interesting and important; the Soldier helps you zero in on the best solution. “When it comes down to where the rubber meets the road,

you find out what is going to be right for the Soldier,” Ferreira said.

“We put the Soldier and scientist together. It’s definitely challenging to do, but that’s why we’re over there,” Traxler said. “We’re like the eyes and ears of the lab.” 

FAST Science Advisers

MUCH like the Field Assistance in Science and Technology Program Science and Technology Assistance Teams, FAST science advisers are conduits between the “real-world” Army and the Army’s Research, Development and Engineering Command laboratories.

As civilian advisers to command groups, they focus on bringing the unique perspective of the research and development world to decision-makers at the highest level. It’s a high-pressure environment, given the scope of RDECOM’s research and development responsibilities.

“We expect the advisers to be very flexible in identifying problems that aren’t necessarily in their area of expertise, but in all areas of expertise,” said Frank Tremain, science adviser-at-large at Fort Belvoir, Va.

They work for a general or colonel where they’re assigned. And flexibility, technical expertise and oral and written communications skills are all keys to the advisers’ success, Tremain added.

Science advisers can also provide a command-level information link with STAT teams stationed on the front lines. Dr. Raymond Bateman, science adviser to III Corps at Fort Hood, Texas, deployed to Southwest Asia twice to lend his expertise in research and development to troop leaders on the front lines.

During Bateman’s most recent deployment last year he also worked with FAST STAT teams in Iraq, to better understand the research and development needs of Soldiers there and to aid the STAT teams in getting that information to decision makers, scientists and engineers.

The Uniformed Army Scientist and Engineer program was also implemented over the past year, coupling military scientists and engineers with science advisers, to further enhance communication between troop leaders and RDECOM.

There are more than 20 FAST science advisers stationed at troop installations around the globe. — Julie Cupernall



From Battlefield to Hospital



SGT Walter R. Davis

Story by SPC Rick L. Rzepka
and SPC Orlando Claffey

SPC Orlando Claffey (both)



“**B**RING me only beautiful, useless things,” said Carl Sandburg in his poem “Murmurings of a Field Hospital.”

The line comes from an injured soldier in a field hospital who, wilted from the exhausting path of war, seeks to find peace as he prepares to return home.

The combat support hospital is one of the last places Soldiers want to find themselves while running the gauntlet of war. But for many Soldiers and civilians, the CSH offers a sliver of the flipside to the brutality of human nature. It is a place dedicated to the alleviation of true pain and the commitment to humanity.

≡ “I Knew I Had Been Shot”

SGT Walter R. Davis of the Fort Wainwright, Alaska-based 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, 172nd Inf. Brigade, was promoted just a few weeks before he was shot in the arm by a sniper near Mosul, Iraq, in January.

SPC Rick L. Rzepka and SPC Orlando Claffey are assigned to the 124th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment and work in the Multi-National Corps-Iraq Combined Press Information Center.



Danger and the possibility of enemy attack are a constant threat for Soldiers in Iraq (*this page and opposite*), but the world's best field medical care is only moments away should they be wounded.



SPC Rick Rzepka

▲ It was in a Stryker like this one that SGT Walter R. Davis was rushed to the 47th Combat Support Hospital after being shot as he and his squad were patrolling in Mosul.

Davis was put in charge of a Company C rifle squad whose members often find themselves on the front lines in the battle against Iraqi insurgents, and he knew the responsibility that came with the stripes he'd just earned. He also understood the inherent dangers of the profession he chose.

The men of the Stryker-equipped 172nd Inf. Bde. had already shed blood. A few months earlier, on Nov. 19, 2005, 11 Co. C Soldiers were wounded and one killed during a firefight with insurgents.

"When something like that happens, it really hits home," said Davis. "I've never been closer to a group of guys in my life."

On the cool morning of Jan. 24, Davis and his men were conducting business as usual in the dense urban jungle of Mosul, a rat's nest of insurgent activity since the war began.

"It was like any other day, really," Davis said. "We had a three-hour patrol in the morning, came in for chow and rolled back out at noon."

On their second mission of the day, Davis and the other Soldiers from Co. C provided security in a heavily

populated area of the city for a tactical psychological-operations team that was distributing flyers and pamphlets to the locals.

Davis and his fire team were tasked to cover the southwest section of the four-corner perimeter that had been established around a mosque, to safeguard both the PSYOPS team and the people inside.

Davis watched as his team dismounted from the Stryker to set up security. As his teammates scanned their sectors for threats, Davis moved from man to man for the better part of an hour to provide guidance and support.

"I went to go check on my squad automatic weapon gunner, and as soon as I stepped off the curb into the street I got shot," said Davis. "I actually heard my bone snap."

"The second I heard the shot, I

saw him hit the ground," said 1LT Joe Vanty, Davis's team leader. He initially thought the body armor Davis was wearing had absorbed the 7.62mm round. Davis stumbled for cover behind the Stryker and fell over.

"I knew I had been shot," Davis said. As he lay in the street, Davis said, he immediately thought of his family back home.

After Davis fell to the ground, medic PFC Jeffrey Stewart rushed over and provided the initial treatment for the wound. "Davis was only down for three to four minutes before PFC Stewart was there with the stretcher," said Vanty.

"I packed the wound and threw a tourniquet on because I couldn't see the exit wound and was worried that Davis would start hemorrhaging," Stewart said. He also determined that the bullet had not hit an artery because of the light color of the blood.

After making sure Davis could breathe without difficulty, Stewart helped Davis into a nearby Stryker. "I thought I was going to throw up, but I didn't," said Davis.

SSG Joseph Anthens, Co. C's senior medic, cut Davis's cumbersome gear away and determined that the wound was "through and through," meaning that the round had gone

"Davis was only down for three to four minutes before PFC Stewart was there with the stretcher," said Vanty.



▲ Soldiers from the 10th CSH in Baghdad carry a wounded Soldier to a waiting helicopter that will take him to Balad Air Base for onward movement to Germany.

straight through Davis's bicep. His fellow Soldiers made him as comfortable as possible and took him to the 47th Combat Support Hospital.

It was a quick trip. Co. C's Soldiers delivered their wounded comrade to the 47th in less than 15 minutes after Davis was hit.

"The Stryker parted traffic like Moses in the Red Sea," said Vanty.

Dedicated to Life

For wounded or injured Soldiers like Davis, the key to survival is immediate and effective treatment. And just as in Davis's case, front-line medics almost always provide that treatment.

On the modern battlefield, military medical professionals are not only trained in their respective specialties, they must also master basic soldiering skills, because of their close proximity to the fight.

A medic takes on the job of the

Soldiers around him, whether he is with the infantry, military police or an explosive ordnance disposal team.

"We live as infantry," said SPC

Joshua Cresswell, a medic with the 101st Airborne Division's 2nd Bn., 506th Inf. Regt. "We do everything they do. We're just one of the guys, until someone gets hurt."

Along with the ammo and gear most Soldiers carry, the medics also lug tracheotomy tubes, IVs, tourniquets and various medicines — in short, everything they need to save a life.

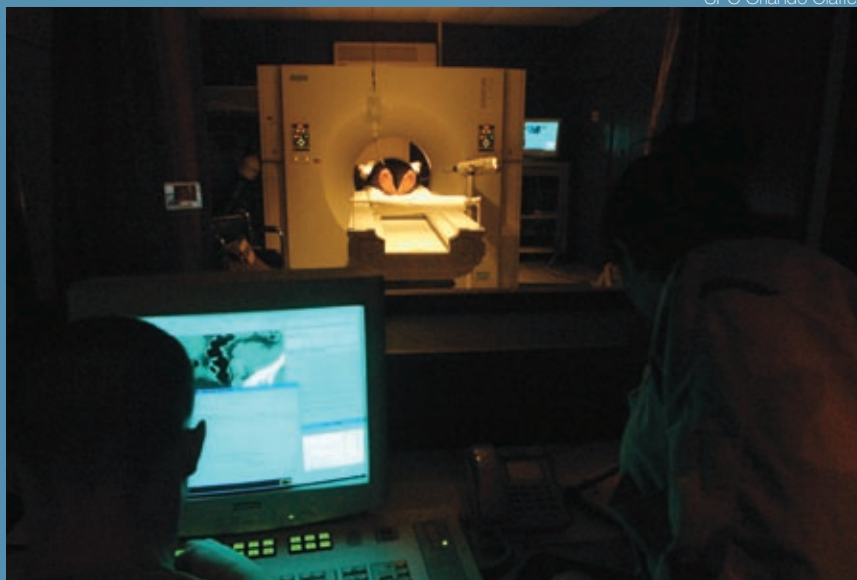
When someone does go down, Cresswell said, the first step is to assess the injury.

"We try to figure out where he is bleeding," he said. The medic checks the person's entire body, often cutting off the Soldier's protective vest. Blood is one of the few things a medic can't replace on the ground, so stopping the flow is vital.

Medics then move on to the airway, stabilizing the breathing through CPR or by inserting a breathing tube, if needed. When more than one Soldier is injured, fellow infantrymen who are trained in first aid lend a hand, but it is the medic who is running the show.

For Cresswell, who's stationed at Camp Prosperity, the near-

SPC Orlando Claffey



▲ CSHs in Iraq can call upon such sophisticated technologies as CT scanners when trying to assess an injured Soldier's wounds.



SFC Rick Rzepka

▲ (Above) Dr. (COL) Randall Espinosa works on Davis's gunshot wound after repairing bone and muscle damage caused by the sniper's round. (Right) With pins stabilizing a patient's leg, Dr. (MAJ) Keith Hill works to stabilize a patient's IED-caused leg wound.

est CSH is the 10th CSH in central Baghdad. The Iraqi capital's crowded streets sometimes make evacuating a patient by vehicle impossible, so he instead calls on air support. With the helicopter medevac procedure memorized, he shouts it out line by line to a radioman while still treating the casualties. There is nothing more important, he said, than getting the Soldiers out of the field and into the equipment-rich environment of a hospital.

The same holds true in Mosul.

"The biggest benefit is the rapid evacuation of the casualty," said LTC David Misner, the emergency room chief at the 47th CSH, which is only 200 meters from Mosul.

There are some disadvantages of being so close to the action, however. The 47th CSH is a frequent target of insurgent mortars and rockets, Misner said, "and while the trauma care is excellent, it's a dirty environment and

we live from boom to boom."

While the Soldiers of the 47th CSH — which provides comprehensive medical care for the northern sector of Iraq — see patients ranging from local nationals to insurgents, they are especially focused when an American Soldier is injured, said CPT Christopher Washack, commander of the 47th's Headquarters and HQs. Co.

That focus was apparent when Davis arrived at the CSH.

The Best Care Anywhere

As the Stryker vehicle carrying Davis came barreling into the 47th CSH's emergency-service lane, Soldiers were ready to quickly transfer him into the trauma bay. Three medics, an anesthesiologist and a trauma-team leader quickly assessed Davis's wound and relieved his fierce pain.

Misner determined that Davis's condition was stable and, from a trauma



SFC Orlando Claffey

ma standpoint, very straightforward, he said. While the 7.62mm round had fractured the Soldier's humerus and decimated one-third of his bicep muscle, all three of the main nerves that run through the arm remained functional.

Davis's injury could have been limb threatening, so he was quickly rushed into the operating room where COL Randall Espinosa, commander of the 274th Forward Surgical Team,

operated on the damaged arm.

"He had a diminished pulse, but his biggest problem was actually the humerus fracture," said Espinosa. In the OR, Espinosa cleansed Davis's wound and repaired the shattered bone with pins.

In past conflicts Davis may have lost his arm, but because of the advanced technology, better response time and more highly trained personnel, injured Soldiers have an increased chance of returning to duty and living normal lives, said Espinosa.

A CSH in Iraq is comparable to a stateside hospital emergency room. With some of the best-trained and experienced trauma surgeons and staffs in the world, the CSHs have all the equipment they need to save a patient's life.

"About 94 percent of the trauma patients who make it to the CSH survive," said COL Dennis Doyle, commander of the 10th CSH in Baghdad. "One reason is because the medics in the field and the medevac pilots get them to us so quickly. Another reason is that we have some talented senior folks."

The 10th CSH receives about 600 patients a month, said Doyle. While they're not all severe cases, it is still more than enough to season a staff.

Fortunately, their workflow has decreased steadily over the past few months.

"I'm convinced that we've recently had more basketball injuries than the ones the insurgents have inflicted," said Espinosa.

About one quarter of the 47th CSH's patients are coalition troops. The rest are local nationals, Iraqi security force members and insurgents, adding a humanitarian element to the hospital's overall mission.

Evacuation and Recuperation


Shortly after his initial surgery, Davis was awarded the Purple Heart by BG Rickey L. Rife, the 101st Abn. Div. assistant division commander for support. And not long after the bedside

In past conflicts Davis may have lost his arm, but because of the advanced technology, better response time and more highly trained personnel, injured Soldiers have an increased chance of returning to duty and living normal lives. . .

award ceremony, the wounded Soldier was on an Air Force C-130 headed to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. There he received further treatment before being evacuated back to the United States.

"He is lucky he hasn't lost nerve function in his arm," said Misner, who expects that Davis will return to duty after he undergoes months of rigorous physical therapy to rebuild the muscle in his bicep.

For his part, Davis is philosophical about the events that put him in a hospital bed.

"I'll tell you, a lot of people tell me that they're sorry for me," Davis said. "I'm not sorry. I'm glad it was me rather than my fire team." 



▲ Still heavily bandaged but well on the road to recovery, Davis displays both a smile and the Purple Heart presented to him by BG Rickey L. Rife, the 101st Airborne Division's assistant commander for support.

SPC Rick Rzepka

From Battlefield to Hospital

TSP for Service Members



SPONSORED by the federal government, the Thrift Savings Plan, or TSP, was established in 1986 as an investment and retirement plan for federal employees. The fiscal year 2001 National Defense Authorization Act expanded the program to cover active-duty military members.

The dollar amount available to a military TSP participant upon retirement depends upon the amount of money the service member contributes to the program and the earnings the contributions make.

Service members may elect to contribute a percentage of their basic pay, incentive pay or special pay, and indicate into which fund or funds the money is invested.

≡ Funds and Earnings

There are several funds to choose from, and participants may apply differing percentages to each. The earnings for each fund differ based upon economic factors. The performance histories of all of the funds are available to assist participants in

G Fund
F Fund
C Fund
S Fund
I Fund
New L Fund

determining where to invest their money.

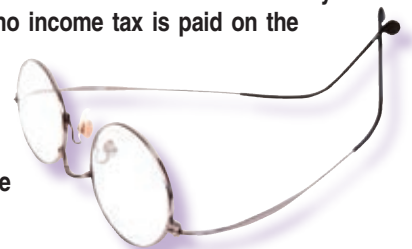
The G Fund is government securities, the F Fund is fixed-income index funds, the C Fund is common stock, the S Fund is a small-capitalization stock index investment and the I Fund is an international stock index investment.

The new L, or lifecycle, funds diversify your account among the G, F, C, S and I funds. Because they provide a time-targeted, professionally determined investment mix among the individual funds, the L funds may be ideal for Soldiers who don't have the time or knowledge to devote to moving their investments from fund to fund for maximum yield in the early years and greater security as they come closer to retirement.

If no funds are specified for allocation, all funds contributed are invested in the G Fund.

≡ Tax Benefit

The TSP offers participants an immediate tax benefit, in that the funds invested in the plan from a service member's pay are automatically deducted from taxable earned income for the year invested. That means that no income tax is paid on the funds deducted from the military salary. Also, there is no longer an "open season" system in which only designated time periods were available for TSP changes.



Steven Chucala is chief of client services in the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate at Fort Belvoir, Va.

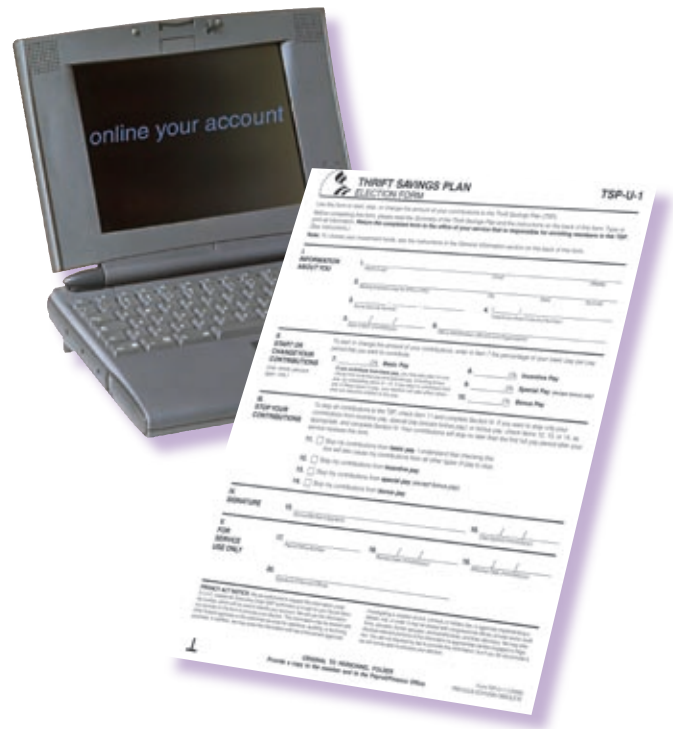
≡ Enrollment and Contributions

To open a TSP account, Soldiers may visit the Defense Finance and Accounting Service's myPay Web site at <https://mypay.dfas.mil>. Once Soldiers sign into myPay, they can select the TSP option to start, change or stop contributions. Soldiers may also submit Form TSP-U-1 through their finance offices. A copy can be downloaded from the TSP Web site at www.tsp.gov.

As of January, there is no limit on the percentage of pay service members can contribute. However, the tax-exempt contributions to the TSP are limited by the Internal Revenue Service's elective-deferral limit, which is presently \$15,000 per year and does not apply to tax exempt pay (i.e. combat pay).

While deployed in a designated combat zone, Soldiers can contribute tax-free pay to the TSP, where it will accrue tax-deferred earnings. The combat zone TSP contributions are not subject to the \$15,000 IRS limit, and they remain penalty- and tax-free when withdrawn.

The IRS still limits the total amount of contributions to a plan to \$44,000 for tax-year 2006. For more information, visit the TSP Web site.



≡ Some Restrictions Apply

The TSP is best described as a supplemental source of retirement income in addition to uniformed services retirement pay, Social Security retirement pay and any other nest egg developed over a lifetime. It is not a savings account from which withdrawals can be made at any time without IRS tax penalty.

Although Soldiers may not make a full withdrawal of their TSP accounts while still on active duty, under certain circumstances an in-service withdrawal for financial hardship or an age-based withdrawal may be available.

Service members may contribute as little as one percent of their basic pay each pay period, and if they leave military service and enter federal civilian service, they may continue their military TSP or combine it with a civilian TSP account. Service members who simply leave military or government service may leave the contributed funds in the TSP account until they reach age 59, and withdraw it thereafter without IRS tax penalty.

Soldiers may also transfer money from eligible employer 401(k)-type plans or individual retirement accounts (IRAs) to their TSP accounts. Other withdrawal options are also available.

For additional information visit the TSP Web site or call the toll free TSP Thrift Line at (877) 968-3778.



- • • • • TSP Web site at www.tsp.gov • • • • •
- • • • • myPay Web site at <https://mypay.dfas.mil> • • • • •

Know the Law

ARMY CHANGES TATTOO POLICY

THE Army has revised its policy on tattoos, in an effort to bolster recruitment of qualified individuals who might otherwise have been excluded from joining.

Tattoos are now permitted on the hands and back of the neck, if they do not represent extremist groups and are not indecent, sexist or racist. Updated Army Regulation 670-1 now specifies that any tattoo or brand anywhere on the head or face is prohibited.

For women, permanent eye-liner, eyebrows and makeup applied to fill in lips is allowed under the regulation.

Army officials changed the old regulation because they realized the number of potential recruits who have tattoos has grown enormously over the years. About 30 percent of Americans between the ages of 25 and 34 have tattoos, according to a Scripps-Howard News Service and Ohio University survey. For those under 25, the number is about 28 percent. — *Army News Service*



AKO GUIDE IS HERE!

THE Army's Internet portal, Army Knowledge Online, or AKO, provides information about every aspect of the Army.

Since its inception in 1999 AKO has allowed Soldiers to check the status of Army benefits, educational programs and a variety of their personal records from anywhere in the world. Soldiers can take advantage of future, targeted training information and gain access to position openings that promote career development.

By building buddy lists, Soldiers can communicate via secure instant messaging. If users need to interact with Air Force members, instant messaging provides that capability. For Soldiers in low-bandwidth situations there's AKO Lite.

For a complete AKO user's guide, see the Hot Topics insert in this issue or visit www.army.mil/soldiers/archives and download the May 2006 Hot Topics.

May Happenings

- Military Spouse Appreciation Day — May 12
- Mother's Day — May 14
- Armed Forces Day — May 20
- Memorial Day — May 29
- Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month

2006 TOUR SCHEDULE

THE U.S. Army Soldiers Show is one of more than 200 morale, welfare and recreation programs the Army provides Soldiers and families worldwide through the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center in Alexandria, Va. Here is their May and June schedule of performances. The schedule is subject to change. — *U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center*

May 5-7	Fort Belvoir, Va.
11-14	Fort Dix, N.J.
15-17	Fort Monmouth, N.J.
18-20	Fort Meade, Md.
21-22	Fort Detrick, Md.
23-24	Tobyhanna AD, Pa.
25-27	Fort Hamilton, N.Y.
June 1-29	U.S. Army, Europe

KOREA DOMINATES ARMY OUTREACH AWARDS

ENTRIES from Korea captured five of the 11 Army Outreach Awards for Excellence presented March 6-7 in Vienna, Va.

The top individual award, however, went to the public affairs officer at Hunter Army Airfield, Ga. The Special Award of Excellence went to the Army Environmental Policy Institute in Arlington, Va. Secretary of the Army Francis J. Harvey presented the awards March 7.

The Outreach Awards recognize the best of the Army's worldwide public-outreach initiatives in three categories: Individual Accomplishment (Series

of Efforts), Ongoing Programs and Special Events.

The judging panel received 25 entries from major Army commands, the Installation Management Agency, field-operating agencies and from direct reporting units.

— ARNEWS

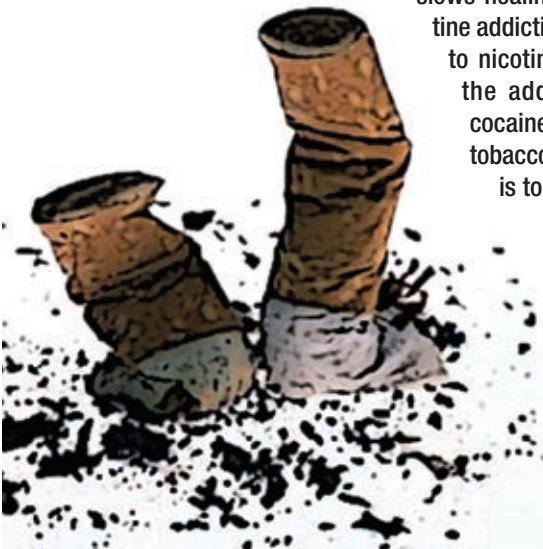


PACKED POISON

RECENT data show a marked increase in the use of tobacco products among America's Soldiers. The long-term effects of tobacco, such as cancer and emphysema, are well known. The more immediate effects on mission readiness are less known. But officials do know that tobacco use increases a Soldier's risk of respiratory problems and injuries to muscles and bones. It

also decreases night-vision ability, slows healing and leads to nicotine addiction. And the addiction to nicotine is as powerful as the addiction to heroin or cocaine. The longer you use tobacco, the more difficult it is to quit.

For information and resources to break the tobacco habit, go to www.army.mil/soldiers/archives and download the November 2005 Hot Topics on tobacco cessation.



Events Calendar

The Army's developing Media Center is continuously updating an Armywide planning calendar. If you have an event you feel would be of interest to an Armywide audience, visit www.Army.mil/outreach.



Soldier Brings **Eskimo Culture** to Iraq

SOLDIERS of the Alaska National Guard's 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry, describe SGT Paul Bavilla as "a shining star, a hero among his people," said the unit's SFC Todd Patnode.

Bavilla is a Yupik Eskimo from Togiak, Alaska. At the age of 35 and with 15 years of Alaska National Guard service, he recently deployed with his unit from Nome to Iraq.

In the tradition of his ancestors, Bavilla is known as an "Eskimo Scout," a title first given during World War II to Alaska natives serving in specialized Army reconnaissance units. The Scouts were instrumental in the battle against Japanese forces that had invaded the Aleutian Islands.

Today, the term Eskimo Scout refers to someone who is an expert at surviving and living through Alaska's harsh weather conditions and using the resources the surrounding environment offers.

"When I first joined the Guard 15 years ago, there were around 2,500 Eskimo Scouts still serving," Bavilla said. "Now there couldn't be more than 1,200 Scouts serving in the military."

Today's Scouts continue to train in the same areas and under the same conditions as their predecessors. Most live modest lives in remote villages, hunting wild animals and enduring extreme weather conditions.

"This guy is as hardcore as they come," Patnode said of Bavilla. "He goes out in sub-zero temperature and lives in the wilderness for months at a time."

Bavilla recalled one incident when he and an uncle were returning from a 50-mile winter trek to collect wood, and the uncle lost the trail.

"My uncle has taught me a lot and has been a great mentor, but on that occasion I was the one who had to save us," he said. "Being a Scout and serving in the Alaska Guard have given me the qualities to become a better Soldier. And the Soldiers here are some excellent guys to be around. They respect me for my work ethic and want to learn my native language." 🇺🇸



*"...a shining star,
a hero among his people."*

SPC Michael R. Noggle is with the 11th Public Affairs Detachment.

Thank You eCYBERMISSION Volunteers for Your Support of America's Youth

The U.S. Army thanks our Volunteers for their dedication and service to eCYBERMISSION—a web-based, science, math and technology competition for 6th-9th grade students. eCYBERMISSION Volunteers diligently work to promote the competition as Ambassadors and Installation Points of Contact (POCs), serve as on-line mentors as CyberGuides and evaluate team submissions as Virtual Judges. Their efforts increase student interest in the science, math and technology fields and help support the nation's commitment to education. We salute their volunteer spirit and praise them for their commitment to America's youth.

From everyone at eCYBERMISSION and participants around the world, Thank You!

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WARRIOR ETHOS



I will never accept defeat

The Warrior Ethos is the common thread that has tied us all together throughout 230 years of service to our nation. Since 1775, American Soldiers have answered the call to duty. From Valley Forge to the battlefields of Gettysburg; from the Argonne Forest to the shores of Normandy; from the rice paddies of Korea and Vietnam to the mountains of Afghanistan and the streets of Baghdad; our military history is rich with the willingness of generation after generation to live by the Warrior Ethos.

Peter J. Schoomaker
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff